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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 006923

SIPDIS

STATE ALSO FOR EUR/SE AND NEA/NGA

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KU](#) [SY](#) [IZ](#) [TU](#) [IR](#) [EG](#) [JO](#) [SA](#)

SUBJECT: IRAQ: TURKISH READOUT OF DAMASCUS MEETING: SAUDIS, KUWAITIS AND JORDANIANS RESIST REFERENCE TO UNSCR 1511

REF: A. STATE 305518

[B](#). ANKARA 6779

[C](#). KUWAIT 4988

[D](#). DAMASCUS 6511

(U) Classified by DCM Robert Deutsch. Reasons: 1.5 (b) and (d).

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) POLMILCOUNS called on MFA Deputy DG for Middle East Safak Gokturk Nov. 5 for a readout of the Nov. 1-2 Damascus meeting on Iraq. Gokturk, who had been at the Damascus meeting, said Turkey worked hard to make the original Syrian draft communique moderate and balanced, and found the meeting useful for monitoring and influencing the views of Iraq's other neighbors. Gokturk said the most surprising elements of the discussion included: resistance by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Jordan, but not Syria or Iran, to a Turkish suggestion to refer in the communique to UNSCR 1511; Syrian opposition to and Saudi insistence on mentioning the October Israeli airstrike in Syria; and the desire of all but Turkey to focus on early withdrawal of foreign forces before addressing constitutional and election issues as spelled out in UNSCR [1](#)511. He noted the next meeting in the series, to which the IGC would be invited, would be hosted by Kuwait at date TBD. Final text of Damascus Communique at para 8. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) On November 5, POLMILCOUNS and POLMILOFF called on MFA Deputy Director General for the Middle East Safak Gokturk (protect throughout) for a readout of the Nov. 1-2 meeting of Iraq's neighbors in Damascus. Gokturk had been part of the Turkish delegation to Damascus and provided the following information, requesting that we carefully protect the source. Gokturk passed us a copy of the final Damascus communique (text at para 8) and explained that this fourth meeting of Iraq's neighbors had been a useful opportunity to compare positions among seven countries with significantly different viewpoints. Turkey, he said, had found each of the four meetings useful for monitoring and influencing Iraq's other neighbors. Gokturk said at the Damascus meeting, the Turks played an influential role in moving the original Syrian draft communique to a more moderate and balanced text, negotiating the language until 2 a.m.

Saudi/Kuwaiti/Jordanian Objection to 1511 Reference

[1](#)3. (C) Gokturk said that Turkey asked to insert an operative paragraph in reference to UNSCR 1511 because the resolution makes an explicit statement on the role of neighboring states and Turkey wanted the meeting to play a role in line with the UNSCR. To Turkey's surprise, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Jordan objected while Syria and Iran did not. In the end, all Turkey could get was a mention of UNSCR 1511 in the chapeau of the communique.

[1](#)4. (C) In the communique's operative language, Gokturk reported, the other participants wanted to lead with a call for the early departure of foreign forces from Iraq. Turkey pointed out that UNSCR 1511 and the Iraqi people both were clear that the sequence should be the development of a constitution, followed by elections, and then the withdrawal of troops. Gokturk also said the original Syrian draft stated that occupying powers should not blame their failures on Iraq's neighbors -- language that Turkey was able to have removed.

Iran Raises Israeli Activity

15. (C) According to Gokturk, Iran asked to insert text on Israeli activity in Iraq, but Turkey and Kuwait argued that this was not relevant to the substance of this kind of document. The Iraqis also proposed language on October's Israeli airstrike in Syria. While Turkey had been clear in its public opposition to the Israeli strike, Turkey objected to including this in the Damascus communique on the grounds that it diluted the text and would help neither the situation in Iraq nor the Arab-Israeli process. Surprisingly, even Syria said it did not want such language in an operative paragraph, though it thanked Iran for the gesture of proposing it. Saudi Arabia then insisted on a reference to the strike and as a compromise, it was referred to in the closing paragraph.

16. (C) Gokturk said that Turkey had offered the communique's opening paragraph for balance and to signal that the IGC would be welcome at the next meeting of the group. That meeting will be hosted by Kuwait at a time to be determined.

Iraq Invitation

17. (C) The first subject ministers took up in a "ministers only" session was the question of Iraqi participation in the meeting. The ministers agreed to extend an invitation to Iraqi FM Zebari via the Kuwaiti FM. Despite early indications that Zebari would attend, the Turks, Gokturk said, had been disappointed by Zebari's public declining of the invitation, which, Gokturk said, Zebari called "too little, too late."

18. (U) Begin Text of Damascus Communique:

FINAL STATEMENT OF THE MEETING OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF IRAQ'S NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES

Damascus-November 2, 2003

In response to the invitation extended by the Syrian Arab Republic to hold a meeting for the neighboring countries of Iraq with the objective to discuss the current developments in Iraq and their repercussions at regional and international level, the Foreign Ministers of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Republic of Turkey, the State of Kuwait and the Syrian Arab Republic held a meeting in Damascus on Ramadan 7 1424 A.H., corresponding to November 2, 2003. The Ministers extended an invitation to the interim Iraqi Foreign Minister to attend the meeting but they did not receive a response; however, they expressed their hope that a representative of Iraq could attend in their forthcoming meetings.

The Ministers recalled their previous meetings held in Istanbul on January 23, 2003, in Riyadh on April 18, 2003, and in Tehran on May 28, 2003, and discussed the current situation in Iraq as a contribution to the objective of enhancing the unity and independence of Iraq and its sovereignty over its territories and natural resources as recognized by Security Council resolution 1511. Pursuant to their deliberations, the Ministers agreed on:

- a) Expressing their sympathy and full solidarity with the Iraqi people in regard to the ordeal they suffer due to the serious deterioration of the security, as well as, the economic and living conditions.
- b) Rejecting any measure that may lead to the disintegration of Iraq, the Ministers reiterated their respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and political unity of Iraq, and their commitment to the principle of non-interference in its domestic affairs, and called upon all others to do the same.
- c) Emphasizing the right of the Iraqi people to freely determine their political future, the importance to enhance the United Nations' vital role in Iraq, especially in regard to supervising the drafting of a constitution, carrying out elections and setting up a timetable to accelerate the transfer of authority to the Iraqis and end the occupation, so as to enable them to regain their rights and sovereignty

over their territories.

d) Supporting the efforts of the Transitional Governing Council in carrying out its transitional responsibilities until the formation of an elected and fully representative Iraqi government that fulfills the aspirations and interests of the Iraqi people, and ensures equality for all citizens of a united Iraq.

e) Reiterating the responsibilities of the occupying authority in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions and international law, especially the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 with regard to the responsibilities of the occupying forces in order to maintain security and stability in Iraq, and rejecting any accusation against their countries of interfering in the internal affairs of Iraq.

f) Condemning the terrorist bombings that target civilians, humanitarian and religious institutions, embassies and international organizations working in Iraq, and stressing the necessity to identify their perpetrators and to hold them accountable for their crimes.

g) Expressing their concern about the existence of terrorist groups in Iraq and the threat that any other armed groups in Iraq represents, the Ministers called upon the responsible Iraqi authorities to cooperate with their countries to eliminate this danger against the neighboring countries and prevent any violation of the borders.

h) Bearing in mind the negative impact of instability and lack of well-being of the Iraqi people on their national interests, the Ministers decided to call on their representatives at the United Nations to collectively follow up their interaction with the UN role in Iraq.

The Ministers expressed their thanks to the Syrian Arab Republic for holding this consultative meeting in Damascus, and their appreciation for meeting with H.E. President Bashar Al-Assad and for his views. They expressed their solidarity with the Syrian Arab Republic regarding Israel exploiting the regional developments in its aggression against the Syrian territories. They also agreed that the meetings, initiated by Iraq's neighboring countries, are worthy of support and continuation to strengthen those objectives in the future. The Ministers, therefore, decided to hold further meetings until Iraq completely restores its sovereignty, security, stability and ordinary life. They also welcomed the invitation of the State of Kuwait to host the next meeting.

End Text.

19. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.
EDELMAN